

## USING MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO GOD'S GLORY

### As We Gather

In his letters Paul used many images to describe the church. To the Corinthians he emphasised the church as a body. Just as the body can only function effectively if all its different interdependent parts fulfil their various functions in harmony with each other, so the church can only be effective if all its members remember that it is the body (of members) that is the life of the church, not the individual members.

### Reading Scripture 1 CORINTHIANS 12 : 1 - 20

### Thinking together

The purpose of the church is to continue the work of Christ. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit gave birth to the church / body and He ministers in and through the body.

Since there was division in the Corinthian church, Paul emphasised the oneness of the church through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- We confess the same Lord [1 Corinthians 12:1-3]  
It is only through the Holy Spirit that a person can honestly say 'Jesus is Lord', because the Spirit strengthens the personality. Through the Holy Spirit we are empowered (gifted) to bring glory to Christ

### How can we discern false teachers in the church? Discuss

- We depend on the same God [12:4-6]  
The manifestations of the Holy Spirit reflect the Trinity
  - The same Spirit (gifts)
  - The same Lord (service / ministries)
  - The same God (working / activities)There is diversity yet unity, which brings glory to God

### Why do people compete with each other in ministry, seeking personal glory? Discuss

- The gifts are given for the good of the whole church [12:7-11]  
When we accept our gifts with humility, then we use them to promote harmony and this helps the whole church bring glory to God

### List the 9 gifts Paul names which focus on promoting unity and the ministry of the church. Discuss

God is not limited to just these gifts. He gives gifts as He pleases. (See also Romans 12 Ephesians 4 1 Peter 4:10-11). We are responsible for using / developing the gifts given to us

### Group Exercise

1. Write down what you feel is (are) your spiritual gift(s)
2. List the members of your group and identify what you think / see as their spiritual gifts
3. Share with each other and discuss

- We have experienced the same baptism [ 12:12-13]  
This once-for-all baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs at conversion, giving the repentant sinner new life and the power for witnessing. As we mature in the Spirit we yield more to Christ and experience the filling of the Spirit.  
Evidence of the Spirit filling is joyfulness, submission / obedience, Christ-likeness and a growing understanding of the Word

**When have you experienced an infilling of the Spirit? Discuss**

- The body needs different functions if it is to live, grow and serve [12:14-20]  
It is in Christ that the diverse parts of the church / body find unity – we are the hands, feet and voice of Christ, bringing glory to Him as we continue His ministry.  
Unity without diversity leads to stagnation and ultimate death of the church, as ministries die. In trying to remain unchanged they stifle creativity and new ideas

**Have you seen this happening in your church? Discuss**

**In Closing**

Some believers feel guilty because they do not possess ‘sensational / lime-light’ gifts.  
Diversity does not suggest inferiority, as Paul points out [12:18-19].

Diversity in the body / church is evidence of the wisdom of God. Each member needs the other members.

